

PHILOSOPHY

<http://philosophy.gmu.edu>

Name and description of the field.

Philosophy: The study of **philosophy** is the reasoned, critical, and systematic examination of fundamental questions in pursuit of a general understanding of values and reality by chiefly speculative rather than observational means. It is, quite simply put, the pursuit of wisdom. Philosophical training enhances the ability of one to problem solve, to understand and express ideas, and to persuade others. It also heightens aesthetic experiences and enlivens one's ability to communicate with many kinds of people, discuss current issues, and discern human behavior. There is also a concentration in Law available in the Philosophy major.

The broadest subfields of these majors are:

- LOGIC: the science of the formal principles of reasoning.
- ETHICS: the discipline dealing with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation.
- METAPHYSICS: the system of principles underlying a particular study or subject.
- EPISTEMOLOGY: the study of the nature and grounds of knowledge, especially with reference to its limits and validity.
- HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY: the study of major philosophers and entire periods in the development of philosophy in an attempt to understand great figures, their influences on others, and their importance to contemporary issues.

What special skills or abilities are needed to succeed in this major?

Sound oral and written communication skills are essential to prepare one to analyze concepts, definitions, arguments, and problems in order to discuss them in writing and through presentations. A love of scholarly works is also desirable as one learns to organize ideas and issues, to deal with questions of value, and to extract what is essential from masses of information that is explored in either major.

Is a Minor available? Yes. We offer minors in Philosophy, Philosophy and Law, and an interdisciplinary minor in Political Philosophy.

What are recent graduates doing?

The major is not primarily oriented to job training of a specific nature. Rather, it serves to improve critical intellectual, analytical, written, and verbal communications skills and to develop flexible, analytical generalists. Thus, graduates have gone into a fairly wide variety of careers, including the following sample of job titles:

Analysts/Researchers	Journalist	Public Affairs Specialist
Clergy	Lawyer	Educator
Consultant	Librarian	Teacher
Diplomat	Market Researcher	Technical Writer
Editor/Writer	Mediator/Conflict	
Human Resources Spec.	Resolution	

Career Library Resources – Go to http://careers.gmu.edu/careerlibrary/wheretostart/phil_reli.pdf to see resources located in the Career Services Library in room 348, SUB I

Major, Career & Job Hunting Information Online (links to the academic department, associations and other useful sites) – Go to http://careers.gmu.edu/onlineresources/phil_reli.htm

EXPLORING MAJORS

Whom should students contact for further information?

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